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SUBJECT: MOZAMBIQUE: GUEBUZA LEADS FRELIMO CENTRAL
COMMITTEE SESSION; NEXT PARTY CONGRESS ADVANCED TO 2006

REF: A. MAPUTO 01449
[B](#). MAPUTO 00313

[1](#)1. (U) On December 18, the Central Committee of Mozambique's ruling party, FRELIMO, concluded a four-day meeting that gathered its 175 members to debate a wide range of issues, including plans for the upcoming electoral cycle, achievements under the new FRELIMO government, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and the GRM's response to the current drought crisis. This is the first time the Central Committee -- considered one of the party's most important decision making bodies, behind only the powerful 15-member Political Commission -- has met since President Guebuza replaced former president Joaquim Chissano as president of the party in March 2005 (ref B).

[1](#)2. (U) Opening the meeting, Guebuza called on members of the Central Committee to contribute to the presence of the FRELIMO party on "all fronts." He stressed the need to properly prepare for the next electoral cycle, slated to begin in 2007 with elections for the first-ever provincial assemblies. The 2007 elections will be followed by the country's third municipal elections in 2008 and its fourth presidential and legislative elections in 2009. To accommodate this electoral timetable, the Central Committee decided during the four-day meeting to advance the Party Congress by a year, now to be held in 2006 instead of 2007 (Note: The Party Congress is usually held every five years, the last one being convened in 2002. End note). According to the Central Committee spokesperson, convening the congress early will allow FRELIMO the time needed to reorganize and strengthen itself ahead of the 2007 elections.

[1](#)3. (U) Speaking on FRELIMO's ability to achieve its campaign slogan, "A Force of Change," Guebuza cited the recent agreement between Mozambique and Portugal under which, within a year, Mozambique will purchase a majority stake in the Cahora Bassa dam, the largest producer of hydro-electric power in southern Africa (ref A). He used the platform to reiterate the need for the Central Committee and all party members to lead the fight against corruption, bureaucracy, and red tape so that public services may be rendered more quickly and efficiently to all of Mozambique's citizens. Guebuza also stressed the need for expanded efforts in the area of HIV/AIDS prevention in order to combat the pandemic in Mozambique and highlighted the GRM's current efforts to address the ongoing drought, which include the construction and rehabilitation of the country's reservoir systems.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Comment: The run-up to this Central Committee meeting featured rumors of growing infighting between

opposing Guebuza and Chissano camps within FRELIMO. However, the tumultuous debate that many expected did not materialize, and it now appears that Guebuza has succeeded in consolidating his power base within the party. At the moment, Guebuza's biggest political adversaries may lie, not in other factions of the party, but in rising fuel prices and the increased cost of living faced by average Mozambicans. End comment.
Dudley